

WILD WEST



A MAGAZINE CONTAINING STORIES, SKETCHES ETC. OF WESTERN LIFE.

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YOUNG WILD WEST ON THE WARPATH

or, Arietta among the Arapahoes.

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YOUNG WILD WEST ON THE WARPATH

OR,

Arietta Among the Arapahoes.

BY AN OLD SCOUT.

CHAPTER I.

THE CAMP ON THE RIVER BANK.

The sun was sinking below the line of the Tunicha range and the dancing spots of silver and gold were fast leaving the surface of the stream known as the Amarvilla River.

Some of the distant peaks were snow-capped, and as the last rays of the declining orb of day fell upon them a glare of dazzling whiteness was thrown out.

All was peace and quietness in that wild spot, for just then silence reigned supreme.

But one look into the thickets that lined the side of the mountain would have been sufficient to cause the casual observer to think that it was just the spot for wild beasts to hold forth and make their trips to the sluggish stream for drink.

Around a craggy peak that towered many feet in the air a trail wound its way, following the crooked stream as far as one would be able to see toward the west.

The trail was not one that had been used much, for the hoofprints were few and scarcely distinguishable, and the wagon-tracks had almost become filled so that only the faintest traces of them could be discerned.

Certainly no one had passed that way within a week, or the tracks would have shown plainer.

But just as the sun sank below the mountains a mounted party rounded a bend and came to a halt below the jagged peak on the bank of the river.

There were seven in the party, four males and three females.

Two of them were nothing more than boys, since they had not yet attained their majority, one was a man of thirty, one a young woman of twenty-five, two were girls of seventeen or eighteen and one a Chinaman, who might have been anywhere from twenty to fifty.

One of the boys was decidedly handsome, and so dashing was he as he sat on the back of a thoroughbred sorrel stallion that he would have been bound to excite favorable comment anywhere.

Attired in a neat-fitting suit of buckskin that was rather elaborately trimmed with scarlet fringe, a sombrero tipped well back upon his head and a wealth of chestnut hair hanging below his shoulders, he surely looked to be a typical young American of the wild West.

And that was just exactly what he was, for the dashing and handsome young rider was no other than Young Wild West, known to his friends as the Prince of the Saddle, and by both friends and foes throughout the West as the Champion Deadshot of the West.

Fearless and cool at all stages of the game, strong and active and ever ready to fight for the right, Young Wild West was one to be emulated by every true lover of fair play who has warm, red blood flowing through his veins.

With Young Wild West were his partners, Cheyenne Charlie and Jim Dart; Anna, the wife of Cheyenne Charlie; Arietta Murdock and Eloise Gardner, the sweet-hearts of our hero and Jim Dart.

Of course, the Chinaman was with the dashing young deadshot, for it has already been stated that he was one of the party of seven.

But he only accompanied them in the capacity of a servant, though he often did much in the way of entertaining them when the evenings grew dull.

the name of the Celestial, and—well, later on.

They find the party of seven they are simply traveling through the wilds of New Mexico in search of adventure and, incidentally, prospecting for gold.

Cheyenne Charlie and Jim Dart were attired in a fashion similar to Young Wild West, while the girls, as they always called them in speaking of them, notwithstanding the fact that Anna was a married woman, wore combination riding and hunting costumes.

All save the Chinaman were armed with Winchester rifles of the latest pattern, and in addition to their cartridge belts, displayed Colt's revolvers and hunting-knives.

Two pack-horses carried their camping outfit, the Chinaman, who, by the way, was mounted on a piebald mule, being in charge of them.

"Well, boys," said Young Wild West, as he brought his horse to a halt and looked at the surroundings, "I guess this will do for a camping-place. What do you think about it?"

"Just the place, I should say, Wild," answered Jim Dart.

"I reckon we couldn't git a much better place if we had it made ter order," Cheyenne Charlie hastened to add.

Charlie was an ex-government scout and Indian fighter, and so used to the mountains and plains was he that he could locate a good camping-place almost before they came in sight of it.

But in spite of his varied experience he always left it to the young leader of the party when any good, hard-thinking was to be done and judgment to be used.

Young Wild West was only a boy in years, but in everything else he was a man.

With one accord they all dismounted.

"This river looked like a tiny silver thread when we first sighted it this afternoon," said Arietta, as she brushed back her golden locks and looked at the muddy water before her. "There is nothing so very pleasing about it now, is there?"

"No, there is not," answered Eloise, the dark-eyed sweetheart of Jim Dart. "But we ought to be glad that we are able to pitch our camp at the side of a river. Water is something we cannot get along without, you know."

"That is right, and, as muddy-looking as that in the river is, it will answer our purpose very well, for when we dip it out it will seem to be quite clear."

Cheyenne Charlie's wife stepped up close to the two girls.

"Watching the water as it runs on down toward the sea?" she asked.

"I doubt if any that we see going past here will ever reach the sea," answered Arietta.

"Oh, yes, it will," Anna declared. "It may be some time in getting there, but this very water we are viewing now will mingle with that which is in that Gulf of Mexico, and that is really the sea, you know."

"I think Anna is right, Et," spoke up Eloise. "It must be that the river has an outlet somewhere, you know."

"Well, I suppose it has, of course. But it hardly seems possible that any of that water will ever get far enough to mingle with the salt of the sea."

The girls soon turned to assist in getting the camp in order.

They were used to it, so it did not take very long.

Twenty partridges had been shot that day by members of the party, and the day before a fine young buck and a black bear had been killed, so they were not likely to go hungry.

They had plenty of supplies along, for they always loaded up at every place they came to that had a store in it.

As soon as the two tents they had with them were put up Wild and Charlie attended to the horses, while Jim and the Chinaman gathered wood for a fire.

"What is it going to be, venison, bear steak or broiled partridges?" asked Arietta, as she made ready to assist in cooking the supper.

"Bear steaks fur me!" answered the scout, who was very partial to that kind of meat.

"Broiled partridges for me," Wild called out.

"All right," was the reply; "we will try and satisfy everybody."

There was a laugh all around at this, and then the cooking began.

Hop Wah was a cook, but the girls generally helped out just because they liked to do it.

He always washed up the articles used after the meal was over and packed them away where they would be handy when next wanted.

This and looking after the pack-horses was about all that the Chinaman did.

It was dark before the supper was ready, for the moments had been flitting by rapidly while they were getting things in order and looking out for their horses.

It was quite a comfortable spot that Young Wild West had selected for a camping-place.

High above them the jagged peak reared itself, and right at their backs was a cliff with an overhanging ledge something like twenty feet, and before them was the river.

Though the weather was not freezing, it was cold enough after the sun went down to make them feel the want of a fire, and as they sat about it waiting for the supper to get done, our hero and his two partners made up their minds that pleasure could be derived from the mere looking at the flames of a brightly-burning camp-fire.

The fact was that they could not be satisfied if they remained in a thoroughly civilized place longer than a week or two.

Young Wild West, Cheyenne Charlie and Jim Dart had lived adventurous lives since they were old enough to know what a gun was, and they were not ready to quit now.

Danger was the very salt of their existence, it seemed. Arietta was about the same way, only that she would be satisfied to stop any place where her dashing young lover chose to make his headquarters.

And Anna and Eloise, while they had not been so very long in the wild West, had learned to love the rolling plains and the rugged mountains.

Then, too, Eloise had not been in the best of health when she came to the great wild West.

But now she was sturdy and strong, with red cheeks and brown hands, and used to the saddle and gun.

Picture to yourself, reader, that little camp under the frowning cliff, with the waters of the Amarvilla flowing silently by, in the extreme wilds of northeastern New Mexico and you can but envy Young Wild West and his friends.

But it was not all peace and quietness like this that they met with.

If it had been, our hero and his partners would have soon tired of it and gone elsewhere in search of excitement and danger.

Though our hero did not anticipate danger just now, he saw to it that a watch was kept.

This he always did, for there was no telling at what time they might be attacked by some roving crowd of outlaws or renegades, who dared not go too near the little towns that were scattered here and there through the mining district of the territory for fear of being summary shot or hanged.

And then there were often bands of Indians on the warpath, for at the time of which we write the redskins were not fully satisfied that the palefaces, as they called the whites, were capable and able to rule them.

All this our friends knew—knew it well, too. But they were not the least bit worried over it.

If they were attacked they would be sure to give a good account of themselves, for was not Young Wild West the Champion Deadshot of the West, and could he not shoot as quick as lightning?"

With his two partners at his side he could whip a dozen redskins or white renegades at any time, providing things were otherwise equal.

After the very good supper that had been prepared by the girls had been eaten, our hero assigned Jim Dart to stand guard for the first three hours of the night, and then, turning to Hop Wah, he said:

"Just get a move on you and get the plates and things washed up, Hop. I am just in the humor to see you perform one of your sleight-of-hand tricks."

"Allee light," answered the Celestial, smiling sweetly; "me do velly nicee tlick putty soonee."

To look at the Chinaman just then no one would have dreamed that he was anything more than just a plain, every-day native of the Flowery Kingdom, such as can be seen in almost every city and town in our land at the present day.

But this was a mistaken idea.

Hop Wah was gifted with the art of sleight-of-hand to a great extent, and since he had been in the country he had learned the ways of the "bad men" of the West to perfection.

He had learned to think that gambling was the greatest pleasure to be had, and he liked to drink whisky now and then.

But with all his faults he was a faithful servant, and as he had once saved his young master's life, he was well come to remain with him as long as he saw fit to do so.

Hop began humming a weird sort of a tune as he hustled to get his work done.

But this particular tune did not please Cheyenne Charlie very much, since he had it in for the Chinaman on account of having been swindled two or three times while playing cards for money with him.

The scout had always had the opinion that he knew all about the game of draw poker until he had a few sessions with Hop.

The yellow-faced heathen's sleight-of-hand did him great service in the game, and thus it was that he got the best of Charlie, as he did everybody else he played with.

When Wild caught him playing with some innocent fellow he always made him quit and give back what he had won.

"I wonder if ther yaller galoot will give us anything new this time?" the scout observed. "Ther last trick he done fur us was one of his old ones."

"But it was a good one, if we had seen it before," Wild answered.

"That's so, too; but I'd jest like ter see somethin' new this time."

"Me showee velly nicee tlick," spoke up Hop, who overheard the remarks.

He soon got through his work, and then, smiling as innocently as a little child, he approached the party as they sat near the foot of the cliff in the full glare of the camp-fire.

Jim was walking back and forth along the river bank, so he was the only one who did not pay any attention, though he could see what was going on.

Hop took out the big yellow silk handkerchief that he always carried and held it up for inspection, as he was wont to do when he was ready to do one of his mystifying tricks.

"Now me bolly Misler Charlie's watchee," he said, shutting his eyes and turning his face upward.

"No, yer won't borry my watch, either, you heathen," was the quick retort from the scout. "You——"

What he was going to say was cut short, for at that instant Jim Dart came up hurriedly, and in a low tone of voice exclaimed:

"A lot of redskins are coming down the river in canoes!"

"Is that so?" said Young Wild West, springing to his feet. "I guess we had better be ready for them, for the chances are that they are around here looking for trouble."

that there were any outside of the reservation. He followed Jim to the bank and found out that the Indians had not made any mistake in what he said. But were the Indians friends or foes? That was the question.

CHAPTER II.

WHAT HAPPENED TO BIG CHIEF JUMPING STAG.

The approaching Indians did not see the campfire of our friends until they were nearly opposite it, since a thick growth of trees and bushes lined the bank above the spot where it was located.

When they did see it they ceased paddling down the river and swung for the opposite shore.

This move satisfied Young Wild West that they were a hostile band.

The young deadshot had his rifle in his hand, as did his two partners.

In case the redskins decided to attack them they would meet with a very warm reception, and they would not all succeed in reaching the bank.

"Get back in the shadow, girls," our hero whispered. "Don't let the redskins see you. There is no need of letting them know that there are females in our party."

The girls obeyed quickly.

They had their rifles, and if it came to a fight they would help, not a little, especially Arietta, who could handle a rifle or revolver as well as the average man of the West, and she was not afraid to shoot a hostile Indian any more than she was to pull a trigger on a wildcat.

She had been taught that self-defense is the first natural law, and as her parents had been massacred by Indians, her feelings toward the race were not kindly.

Our hero counted the canoes and found that there were six of them, with an average of five inmates to each.

But there were seven or eight squaws and some papooses and older children with them.

It was not hard to tell this, since the stars were shining brightly and the light they gave out was sufficient.

"They are Arapahoes, as sure as I live!" declared Wild, as the larger of the canoes slowly turned and headed for the shore where the three were crouching behind the bushes.

"That's right, Wild," said the scout. "What in thunder are they doin' way down here, I'd like ter know?"

"Oh, they are cutting loose from the reservation, that's all," remarked Dart. "There are all kinds of redskins there, you know."

"Well, they are Arapahoes, all right," said the scout, shaking his head in the grim way that was peculiar to him when danger lurked close at hand.

On came the single leading canoe, straight for the bank,

the rest remaining near the middle of the stream, which happened to be quite wide just there.

Since the redskins had seen the campfire and knew that someone must be there, Wild thought he might as well call out to those in the canoe.

There was a chief in it, as could be seen by his feathered head-dress.

"Hello, redskins!" the boy called out, coolly. "What is the trouble?"

"Ugh!" came the reply; "Injuns want palefaces to give some salt and some firewater."

"We can spare you a little salt, I guess, but we have no firewater," Wild answered, knowing very well that there was going to be trouble, but thinking it best to be civil until there was.

The prow of the canoe soon struck the bank.

A young buck promptly seized the grass that lined it and swung the lightly-constructed craft around until it was side to.

Then the chief stepped boldly upon the bank, throwing out his chest to indicate that he was one who thought considerable of himself, as he did so.

He found himself standing in front of a fearless-looking boy an instant later.

"Ugh!"

"Ugh!" answered Wild, promptly.

"Me Jumping Stag, heap much big chief of Arapahoes," grunted the redskin, throwing his chest out still further and smiting it with his clenched fist.

"Well, Jumping Stag, you may be a big chief of the Arapahoes, and all that, but you can't get any firewater here, because we haven't any to give you. You are welcome to a little salt, if that will do you any good."

"Ugh! Injun chief must have firewater."

"Well, if you must have whisky you will have to go somewhere else and get it; you can't get it here."

"Paleface heap much talk; no give chief whisky me make trouble."

"Oh! is that so? Well, you just start right in and make your trouble if you want to. Don't you have the idea that you can scare us. The minute you go to making trouble around here something will happen to you, remember that."

Without turning his head, the Indian said something in a low tone in his own tongue.

Wild knew that the remark was addressed to those in the canoe, and that it no doubt meant danger to them.

Charlie and Jim had not allowed themselves to be seen by the red visitor, but they were within a few feet of him.

They were simply waiting to see what Wild meant to do.

No matter what it was, they were ready.

"Redskin," said our hero, speaking in a voice that was full of meaning, "you get into that canoe, and be quick about it! I mean what I say!"

At this the redskin threw his head around so he could get a better view of the dashing boy's face.

"Ugh!" he exclaimed; "Jumping Stag knows you! You Young Wild West, the paleface boy brave. Heap much talk, but no fight."

"So you know me, do you? Well, that is more than I can say of you. I don't know as I ever saw you before, nor do I care whether I ever see you again or not. Now then, you heard what I said, Jumping Stag. If you know anything about me at all, you ought to know that I always mean what I say."

The chief gave another grunt, but did not make a move to step back into the canoe.

Wild gathered his muscles with the intention of knocking the Indian backward, either into the canoe or the water, he did not care which.

Just then a yell came from the braves in the canoes and the splashing of paddles told that the Indians were hurrying to get to the bank.

Biff!

Wild struck the chief a blow just under his left short-rib.

Crash!

Jumping Stag went over like a ten-pin, landing squarely in the canoe.

But the frail craft was not used to being boarded in that way, and it did not stand for it.

It turned over instantly, and all its occupants but the young buck, who was holding fast to the grass that lined the bank, were tumbled unceremoniously into the water.

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed Cheyenne Charlie, unable to restrain himself. "That's ther way ter fix ther measly coyotes, Wild! That's ther best I've seen in a good while!"

Wild laughed himself, and so did Jim.

Though they both knew that the situation had now become serious, they could not help it.

"Stand ready, boys, and give them fits!" our hero cried. "If they try to land, shoot to kill. They mean to kill us, so we mustn't let them get the least bit of advantage!"

They crouched low to the ground now, and, peering through the bushes, they saw one of the Indians crawling along the bank less than ten feet from them.

It was the fellow who had been holding fast to the bank when the canoe became upset.

Wild started toward him swiftly but noiselessly.

He reached him before the Indian knew that he had been discovered.

One quick push from the athletic boy and the young buck was floundering in the shallow water of the river.

Meanwhile, the foremost of the canoes had reached the chief and the others who had been in the canoe that had been overturned and the wet redskins were being fished out.

The rest of the canoes did not come any closer than twenty feet of the shore.

The redskins were waiting for further orders from their chief.

But just then he was gasping and sputtering in the bot-

tom of the little craft he had been in the strong arms of a couple of his followers.

Our friends were a little bit anxious as to what the scoundrels would do next.

It seemed that they would surely make an attack on them, especially after what had just transpired.

But such was not the case.

Instead, the canoes started for the other shore, the one that had been overturned being towed along with them.

"I guess they mean to wait awhile," said Wild. "But they don't mean to let it go at this, boys, that is certain."

"Yer kin bet they don't!" exclaimed the scout. "They'll be back ag'in afore mornin', an' when they come they'll make things hum fur awhile."

"That's right. Now, Jim, you just keep a watch on them while we go and fix up the camp, so we'll have a chance if they do come back."

"All right," answered Dart; "go ahead."

"Have they decided to leave us alone, Wild?" asked Arietta, as our hero and the scout came hurriedly to the camp.

"For awhile they have, Et," was the reply. "But the tricky scoundrels mean business, I guess. They will be back before morning. I tumbled the chief into the canoe so hard that he upset it and sent the whole lot into the water. If he was ready to fight because I told him we had no whisky, he certainly will fight now. But we'll be ready for them when they come, I guess. Hop, just get to work here and help get this fallen tree across so we can lie down and shoot from behind it."

It was not a very large tree, but it would make an admirable breastwork, so the three immediately got hold of the smaller end and dragged it around to the position they wanted to get it in.

The tree had been uprooted by the fury of some storm and its roots still held fast.

But this made no difference, since the butt was in just about the place they wanted it.

When it was duly placed in position the trunk was about three feet from the ground, leaving an open space of a foot beneath it.

There were plenty of stones and boulders of all sizes at the foot of the cliff, and they got to work at carrying and rolling those they could not carry to the spot.

The girls joined in this, for they wanted to do all they could in the matter.

It never once occurred to any of them that it would be the best policy to leave the vicinity.

Wild had not intimated anything like that, so it was taken for granted that they were doing the proper thing in remaining there.

There were only about thirty of the redskins, all told, and nearly half of them were squaws and children.

Young Wild West and his partners would not run away from that number of redskins, unless they happened to be ready to leave just then.

showed his hostility, so they meant to
ance to see what he could do.
had not been much surprised when the redskin
gnized him, for he had been among them so much,
both in times of war and peace, that the reputation he had
made had no doubt become known to them so they had
taken pains to know him.

"I think they will be a little bit cautious about tackling
us," he said. "Jumping Stag has heard how I am in the
habit of treating bad Indians, and the punch I gave him
under the ribs a little while ago will help make him care-
ful."

"Oh, they'll try ter sneak up an' catch us nappin', I
reckon," said the scout.

"Lettee Injuns come!" said Hop Wah; "me fixee
something velly muchee funny; ledskins no likee and lun
likee Old Hally!"

"What is ther yaller galoot up ter now?" asked the
scout, shrugging his shoulders.

"He is going to give an exhibition with some of his
fireworks, I guess," remarked Arietta.

"You guessee allee light, Missy Alietta," and the Chi-
naman nodded in a pleased way.

Then a long wait followed.

CHAPTER III.

A CHANGE OF QUARTERS.

The night slipped along and twelve o'clock came with-
out our friends hearing or seeing anything of the Arapa-
hoes.

But they were sure that they were on the other side of
the river, for a strict watch had been kept and the canoes
had not showed up after they crossed the stream and be-
came lost to view beneath the overhanging willows that
lined the bank at that point.

Cheyenne Charlie was doing guard duty now, and he
was going to continue until halfpast one, unless he was
interrupted by the Indians.

Young Wild West knew he could place the utmost de-
pendence on the scout, so he slept soundly.

It was just a little after halfpast one when Charlie came
in and woke him.

"Everything is all right, eh, Charlie?" Wild asked, as
he arose and came out of the tent.

"Yes, everything's all right so far. I reckon ther red-
skins are goin' ter wait till jest afore daylight if they
mean ter bother us at all. That's ther old way, yer know."

"That's right, Charlie. Well, let them wait until that
time if they like. It will be all the better for us, for we
can do better in the daylight at shooting straight."

Our hero picked up his rifle and walked down along the
river bank.

All was still as the grave.

Even the insects seemed to be quiet just then.

It was really an unusual silence and our hero could not
help noticing it.

But it was not to remain that way long.

Suddenly the faint sounds made by distant hoofbeats
came to the ears of the dashing young deadshot.

"Ah!" exclaimed Wild; "I wonder what that means?"

Nearer came the sounds, and then he realized that the
horses that were coming that way were not a few.

"I wouldn't be a bit surprised if more of the Arapahoes
are coming," the boy muttered. "If that is the case it
will go rather bad with us, I suppose."

It was not until he became satisfied that the horses were
coming straight along the trail and were bound to ride
right into the camp if they continued to come that he de-
cided to awaken his companions.

Charlie was just dropping off to sleep when Wild called
him.

Then Jim was aroused in a hurry.

But by this time the horses had come to a halt, for
they could no longer be heard.

Wild was a little uneasy.

"They are redskins, you can bet!" he said. "Some of
those from the other side of the river have gone to meet
them and let them know that we are here."

Our friends had allowed the campfire to go out long
since, so the redskins had nothing to guide them to the
spot.

"Wait here, boys, till I go and find out what is up," said
the young deadshot. "I won't be long in finding out."

He started off immediately, picking his way along noise-
lessly through the bushes.

Charlie and Jim waited patiently for him to come back.

After what seemed a long while to them, though it was
really but a few minutes, Wild came back.

"We must get ready to move right away," he said.
"There are a couple of hundred of them, and they belong
to the gang that are on the other side of the river. Two
of those who were in the canoe with the chief when it was
upset are there. They went up a mile on the other side
and swam and waded across to meet the Indians on horse-
back. All the Arapahoes that were on the reservation
have left it and intend to work their way north to their
old hunting-grounds and kill all the palefaces that oppose
them. They are going to clean us out in about an hour
from now to make a beginning. Their lingo is so much
like the Sioux that I could understand almost every word
they said. They were talking about the very things that
I was anxious to know, too."

"Great Gimlets!" ejaculated Cheyenne Charlie; "I
reckon we'd better git on ther move, then."

"That's right. There are too many of them for us, and
there is no use in placing the girls in danger. Just wake
them up and let them help get ready to move. We may
be able to get away, though it is more than likely that one
or more is watching the camp pretty closely at this very
minute."

Charlie and Jim hastened to the tent where the girls were sleeping.

It did not require much to arouse them.

When they were told what was on the programme they hurriedly got ready and came out of the tent.

Then the Chinaman was awakened—a much harder task than it had been to get the girls up—and the work of taking down the tents and loading the pack-horses was begun.

It was necessary for at least one of them to keep a watch on the redskins, so Wild himself did that.

He crept back to the place where he had been when he saw and heard them a little while before.

The place was only about three hundred yards from the camp, and was one that was shielded on all sides by the river bank by a thick growth of cottonwoods and willows.

Our hero crept up very close, for the redskins had placed no guards out, and then he was able to see them quite plainly in the starlight that shone upon them from the open space at the riverside.

He was just in time to see those who had gone to the other side with the canoes appear.

They had no doubt carried their canoes up the river and embarked from some point above, so our friends would not hear them.

There were plenty of women and children in the crowd that had come down on horseback and the horses and ponies they had with them numbered many.

The squaws and children were silent, but the braves were talking in whispers and appeared eager about something.

Of course that something was to attack the camp of our friends.

Wild knew that.

He had heard enough in the few minutes he had been there before to know that the redskins were very sore against the whites, and that they were going to attack the first they came across.

By listening carefully and straining his eyes to peer through the gloom, our hero soon learned that Jumping Stag was the chief that ruled over the whole party.

He had come down the river with the canoes in advance of the rest just because he had taken a notion that way.

He had the canoes at his disposal, and as they intended to travel a certain distance in the same direction the river flowed, he came that way, bringing with him his squaw and children and some others that he had chosen.

Wild heard him telling three minor chiefs about the camp of the palefaces, and that the young paleface brave, Young Wild West, was there.

The other chiefs had heard of him, and they all declared that they would be glad to meet Young Wild West and show him how an Arapahoe could fight.

"All right," thought our hero. "You fellows may have a chance at me before you are very much older. I would just like to take you one at a time. Fighting a redskin on equal terms is just a little pastime for me, though if

some were to hear me say it they would be ting."

Wild waited until he was sure that the Indians mean to attack them right away and then left the spot making his way softly to the camping-place that was to be abandoned in such a hurry.

His partners and the girls had made rapid progress in getting ready to move.

"Is everything all right?" Dart asked.

"Yes; I am satisfied that the redskins don't know that we are aware of their presence. They must be fools if they don't, though, for they ought to know that we most likely heard the noise made by their horses."

"Well, you was ther only one what heard 'em," observed the scout; an' I reckon you wouldn't have if you hadn't been expectin' ter hear somethin'."

"That's right, Charlie; but I think they took a pretty good risk in coming so close, unless they did not care whether we heard them or not."

It did not take them long to get ready to move now.

When they were ready Wild sent the rest ahead and then stole back to make sure that their movements had not been observed by any spying redskin.

He was satisfied that they knew nothing of what was taking place, so he hastened back to where he had left his horse, and, mounting, rode off to overtake his companions.

He came upon them a quarter of a mile from the place they had been camped and quickly advised that they swing off to the right and ride up the hill so they could double and get around to the other side of the Arapahoes.

This was no doubt the best thing they could do, for to go on down the trail would be but going in the same direction that the band of Indians was heading, and it would be only a question of a few hours before they would be overtaken by some of them.

But picking their way up the rough side of the mountain in the dark is no easy task.

They were forced to proceed slowly, for there was no telling what pitfalls they might run into.

Wild did not have to tell anyone to be as quiet as possible; they all knew that danger lurked nigh, and that was enough.

Our hero found it necessary to walk after they had got up the hill a short distance, so he quickly dismounted.

It was not necessary that they should all walk, but the scout followed his example.

Then they picked their way along through the dense chaparral, along dangerous ledges and over the uneven surface of the mountain-side.

In about twenty minutes Wild judged that they must be almost directly above the spot where they had been camped.

But they could not have seen below if it had been daylight, for the bushes and trees were so thick there that it would have been impossible.

It is rougher up here than I had an idea of," remarked

He had paused and listened for a minute
"should reckon so," answered the scout. "It might
that we won't be able ter git down by ther river from
this side, Wild."

"We won't if we don't try."

But though he spoke this way, our hero was beginning
to think it was extremely doubtful if they were able to
get much farther in that direction.

But he considered that they were pretty lucky so far,
for nothing had been heard of the Indians, who must be
at least a mile below them, if they had not moved yet.

A little further on they were forced to swing to the left
a little, and then they were working their way almost
straight toward the jagged peak.

Just a little more than half an hour from the time they
started out they found that they could go no further.

A chasm that was fully twenty feet in width blocked
their further progress. "I guess we will stop right here,"
said Wild, as he peered first to the right and then to the
left and could see no possible chance of crossing the chasm.
"This is a great deal better place to put up a fight than
where we were, anyhow. There is water here, too, for I
hear it trickling down the rocks. Dismount, everybody,
and we will go in camp."

As dark as it was, they could see that the spot was ad-
mirably adapted for a retreat.

There was a V-shaped cliff with a wide overhanging
ledge, and directly in front of the indenture was the
chasm.

The only way to get to it was by the way they had come,
and there was no other way to leave it, as far as they could
see in the dark.

The ledge above them was amply large enough to shield
them, in case rocks or boulders should be tumbled down
from above, and if an attack was made from the front they
had plenty of rocks to lie behind and pick the redskins
off.

When Young Wild West had looked the place over care-
fully he gave a nod of satisfaction.

"I guess we can hold this place against that crowd,
anyhow," he said. "Just get things in shape so the girls
can go to sleep again."

CHAPTER IV.

THE REDSKINS CAPTURE CHEYENNE CHARLIE.

Wild knew that in case the redskins did not find them
that night they could easily do it in the morning, for it
had been impossible to hide the trail.

There was room for the horses under the ledge, too, so
there was little danger of any of them being shot, unless
the Arapahoes came with such a rush that they did not

care how many of them went under so long as they accom-
plished their purpose.

The tents were erected and the girls went to sleep, or
tried to, while Wild, Charlie and Jim remained on guard.

Hop was the only one in the party who did get all the
sleep that was coming to him.

But he was one of the sort who depended on others to
protect him in times of danger, and if he had that much
confidence in them they could not begrudge him of the
sleep he got.

When daylight came our hero breathed a sigh of relief.

"Now we will be able to see what we are doing if the
redskins come for us," he said. "Charlie, if you don't
mind, you can take a little scout along the back trail and
see how the land lies."

"I reckon that's jest ther proper thing ter do," was the
scout's reply. "You bet I'll go, Wild!"

He soon started off, working his way through the
bushes in the dull gray light of the early morning and
using the utmost caution, for he was not sure but that
some of the Indians were lurking about.

"Ther trail is plain enough fur ther red galoots ter
find," he muttered, as he made his way along, pausing
now and then to listen and take a look around through the
haze that hung over the chaparral like a pall.

When he had covered about a hundred yards he sud-
denly came upon an eagle feather that was lying on the
ground.

At the same moment he discovered the prints of moc-
casined feet!

The feather was undoubtedly one that had dropped
from the headgear of a redskin, and the footprints were
plainly those of one of them.

Charlie was in a pretty tight place, and he knew it.

One of the Arapahoes was right near him at that mo-
ment.

He had not the least doubt of it.

The scout changed his revolver to his left hand and
drew his keen-edged hunting-knife.

Then he crouched close to the ground and looked
around.

There were so many rocks and bushes there that it was
impossible for him to see anything that might possibly be
a redskin.

He listened, but could hear nothing.

But there were the tracks made by moccasined feet
right before his eyes!

An Indian had passed that way, and very recently, too,
as the marks indicated.

And he had been following the trail our friends had
made when they went up the mountain-side.

That was very plain, for the toes pointed the same way
as the other tracks did.

Charlie hardly knew whether to go back in the way he
had been going.

Before he could decide something happened.

The lithe form of an Indian suddenly leaped from behind a bush and landed upon the scout's back!

It happened so suddenly that the revolver was knocked from his hand.

But he held fast to the knife, and, throwing up his left arm, caught his attacking foe about the neck.

A low cry of warning came from the redskin's lips and then a fierce struggle began.

Charlie, having been taken unawares, was at a great disadvantage.

But that did not lessen his strength or skill any, and when he succeeded in getting his arm around the Indian's neck he had a show.

He whirled his opponent over and got half upon him, all the while fighting to keep from being stabbed with the knife the redskin had drawn.

Charlie, too, clutched a knife, but he could not get a chance to use it.

There is not the least doubt that the scout would have ultimately won the fight if something had not happened.

The Indian's cry, low as it had been given, had been heard by one of his companions.

Just as Cheyenne Charlie was in a fair way to have a chance to use his knife the other redskin appeared on the scene.

He did not come with a rush so he could be heard, either, but with a stealth that was equal to that of a man stealing up to surprise his foe.

Before the scout knew of his presence at all the newcomer pounced upon him and pinned his disengaged arm to his side, at the same time clutching him by the throat with a vise-like grip.

Charlie uttered a gasping cry and then his wind was shut off.

The next second both Indians were holding him down and binding him with buckskin thongs.

If the scout had been upon his feet there is hardly the least doubt but that he would have soon overcome the two of them, but he had no show after the second one appeared.

After giving that one cry he remained perfectly still, for he knew that he could gain nothing by yelling for Wild and Jim.

As the two redskins picked him up bodily and started down the hill with him Charlie exclaimed:

"You'd better let me go, you red galoots. It'll go hard with yer if yer don't."

"Paleface shut up!" was the retort from one of them; "Injuns take to camp and then chief make him wish he never was born!"

"No, he won't," retorted the scout; "there ain't no chief that ever lived what kin make me wish I was never born. Don't let anything like that get in your head."

Both redskins laughed at this.

It was evident that they thought differently.

They half carried, half dragged their prisoner down

the hill and soon reached the trail that bank.

Then one of them let out a cry which was answered by one of the Arapahoes, who was out around the bend, and the next instant he showed up.

When he saw that a prisoner was being brought to the camp he uttered a whoop of delight and then quickly ran back out of sight.

Charlie knew that he had simply gone to apprise the rest of the band of the capture that the two scouts had made.

"Cut my ankles loose an' I'll walk along all right," he said to them, as they proceeded to drag him over the ground by his arms. "I ain't goin' ter try an' run away."

But they paid not the least attention to what he said. Evidently they were not going to give him a chance to make the attempt to run away.

A minute later as many as a dozen of the Arapahoes were hastening to meet them, and as soon as they got up to him they grabbed the helpless scout and fairly ran with him to the camp, which he soon found to be located in the identical spot they had quietly left the night before.

Charlie was not frightened, nor was he in an easy frame of mind.

It was not the first time he had been in the clutches of redskins, and he really felt that it would not be the last.

He looked at the red villains indifferently as they swarmed around him after he had been dropped upon the ground.

And when some of the old squaws of the tribe came up and poked sticks at him he only grinned at them.

It was only a forced grin, however, and they must have known it, for they looked at each other and laughed harshly, jabbering away in their own language meanwhile.

"Let yourselves go, you ugly-lookin' she-cats!" he exclaimed. "I'm used ter it, I reckon."

At this juncture the chief came up.

He put on his fiercest look as he surveyed the form of the helpless scout.

"Well, how about it, Jumpin' Stag?" Charlie asked, returning his gaze with interest; "are yer goin' ter let me go?"

"Ugh!" exclaimed the chief, wrinkling his brows; "pale-face heap much fool!"

"Maybe I am; but if I am I can't help it. Now I jest want ter tell yer somethin', chief! If you don't let me go you'll be mighty sorry fur it, an' I'll bet on it! You're sneakin' away from ther reservation, but you'll be caught afore many suns, an' then ther soldiers will give yer fits. If they find out that you've been botherin' ther palefaces you'll git your medicine as sure as guns!"

Charlie knew that the Indians were afraid of the soldiers, and he meant to scare him if it was any way possible.

But it so happened that Jumping Stag had allowed it to creep into his mind that he had sufficient warriors at his back to whip all the soldiers that could be gathered

high puzzled and not a little frightened, the old fellow did not lose his grit.

He rushed about to the right and left, yelling to his followers to make ready to shoot the palefaces.

The old fellow had evidently seen fireworks before, and though he did not exactly understand them, he laid the remarkable occurrence to Young Wild West and his friends.

It was quite likely that if it was Young Wild West who was responsible for it that he had come to save the paleface maiden.

The old chief must have thought this, for he immediately called out for his braves to surround the tepee and be ready to shoot down the palefaces who had attacked them, he declared.

The result was that Arietta found herself cut off from all chance of escape in less than a minute after the second display of fireworks.

"Arietta must sit down and make believe her hands are tied," the Indian girl whispered; "the chief is afraid you will——"

Bang!

The words of Shining Eyes were cut short, for at that instant there came a loud report from almost under the feet of the chief and he leaped into the air and came down on his back with force enough to jar every bone in his body.

Arietta still had her face to the opening she had made in the tepee.

Just as she was going to remove it and do as the squaw directed her a form crept right before her.

It was Hop Wah!

"Me comee to savee you, Missy Alietta!" he whispered in a shrill undertone.

Zip!

Arietta cut the slit larger in the skin that formed the side of the tepee.

"Come in here, Hop!" she exclaimed; "hurry, or they will see you!"

The Chinaman came through with remarkable quickness.

Though the braves had now formed a circle around the tepee, it was just dark enough there so they failed to notice the Chinaman.

And they were paying more attention to the chief than anything else just then, anyhow.

"Me makee ledskins feel allee samee 'flaid, so be," said Hop, as he allowed the girl to push him down and throw a blanket over him.

"Sh!" cautioned Arietta.

"Allee light; me be velly still, alle samee lillie mouse."

Arietta now pulled the rent skin together as well as she could and crept to the regular opening of the tepee.

Shining Eyes was so much surprised and frightened that she sat there without offering to say a word.

Jumping Stag had righted himself up now, and, finding that he was not hurt, he yelled out for a search to be

made of the camp for the one who had caused the remarkable happenings.

Then, while a search was being made, he stalked over to the tepee where his fair prisoner was confined, bearing in his hand a burning faggot from the fire.

When he flung open the skin that hung over the entrance and held the light in front of him he saw Arietta seated on a pile of skins, and, crouching near her Shining Eyes, who really did not have to put it on that she was afraid.

"Ugh!" grunted the old scoundrel, and then he allowed the flap to fall in place.

Arietta breathed a sigh of relief as he went away and promptly got up and crept to the flap.

There was a great hub-bub throughout the camp now.

The followers of the chief were running about in every direction with torches in their hands and their heads close to the ground.

Just then who should appear upon the scene but Lame Elk, followed in double file by those who had deserted the camp to cast their lot with him.

Instantly the confusion abated.

Jumping Stag stalked angrily forward to meet him.

A deep silence fell over the assemblage as Lame Elk and his warriors came to a halt.

Then in a loud tone of voice the old chief began berating his rival in the language of the Arapahoes.

"What does he say, Shining Eyes?" Arietta asked the squaw.

"He says that Lame Elk is a traitor, and that he has the palefaces with him," was the reply. "He says that Lame Elk knows who made the queer fireworks and caused the explosion that knocked him down. He going to punish him by wiping out the young chief and all who stay by him. There! they have agreed to fight. Lame Elk and his braves are drawing back to get ready for battle!"

This was indeed the case.

The two chiefs had come very quickly to the conclusion to fight it out without any further loss of time.

"Me makee old ledskin jumpee some more," said Hop, as he flung aside the blanket.

Then before Arietta knew what was going to happen he struck a match, applied it to something he had in his hand and sent it whizzing at the old chief.

Bang! Jumping Stag dropped and went rolling over the ground like a rubber ball!

CHAPTER XII.

CONCLUSION.

Hop Wah had not been gone from the camp more than ten minutes when Wild turned to his companions and said:

"Well, I guess it is time we started in to do something.

ugh point which could be climbed quite thought, so, without the least hesitation, she do it.

Arietta now felt that she was going to have a view of the entire camp of the Arapahoes, and she figured that it would be something of great advantage to them if she did.

Halfway up the second ascent she looked down and found that she could not see her friends, since the top of the cliff cut off her view of them.

But she could see farther and closer in to the foot of the mountain, though, and that was what she was striving for.

In another minute she had reached the top of the highest point that was anywhere around the vicinity, and once there she found it was a ridge that sloped in a direction almost opposite to the cliff, broadening as it went.

It was covered with thick bushes, stunted trees and rocks.

But the girl was not there to inspect that part of the land.

She had come up there to have a look at the Indian camp, which lay a little over a mile below at the foot of the descent.

She could see nearly all of it now, much to her satisfaction.

"My!" exclaimed Arietta; "look at the Indian ponies they have got with them! There can't be enough braves in that crowd to ride all of them. They have two horses to one redskin, I guess."

From the horses her gaze turned to the camp in general.

Then it was that she gave a violent start.

Tied to a tree that was not very far from the river bank she saw a white man.

It was Cheyenne Charlie.

Arietta was not at all surprised.

"So the red fiends did catch him, eh?" she mused. "Well, that is too bad! I wonder where Wild is? Trying to find a way to get Charlie free, I suppose. Well, I will——"

That was all she said, for just then something happened that she was not expecting.

Two Indian braves who had been creeping toward her through the bushes sprang upon her and covered her mouth so she could not utter a cry, at the same time rendering her powerless to act.

Though astounded at what had happened so suddenly, Arietta did not lose her head.

She struggled to free herself, which was quite a natural thing for her to do, even if she knew it would do no good.

There is always a possibility that one can wriggle from the grasp of a foe, and it pays to try it every time.

But the brave girl stood no show with those two muscular red men.

While she was yet struggling to get away from them they were bearing her off down the slope.

The redskins moved swiftly, too, for they had come up for the purpose of trying to find the camp of our friends, and they knew the way down.

Once at the foot of the slope they paused long enough to tie the girl's hands and cover her mouth with a torn piece of blanket.

Then they swung around and made for the foot of the hill.

Once upon the trail below they hurried to the camp.

Jumping Stag and his chiefs and braves, who were going to show their skill in the art of knife-throwing, were gathered in front of the paleface prisoner two of them had captured, when in came the other two who had been sent out to locate the camp of the palefaces, bringing with them a paleface maiden!

This was surely great in the eyes of the savage redmen.

They had left the peaceful reservation and started out to do as they had done before the soldiers came and drove them from their hunting-grounds, and they were having the very best kind of luck, so they concluded when they saw Arietta being led in by the two braves.

"Ugh!" grunted the old chief, nodding his approval to the two Indians; "braves heap much smart; paleface maiden shall sit in the lodge of Jumping Stag when we get to the prairie of the Platte. Ugh!"

The minor chiefs nodded, and then the rest of the redskins showed their approval by uttering a yell.

Arietta looked at the face of Cheyenne Charlie and saw that there was a hopeful look on it.

This was encouraging to her, and she forced a smile and nodded her head.

Jumping Stag saw this act and a look of wonderment shone from his black eyes.

Evidently he was not used to seeing a white girl smile in the face of danger.

But he had met few who possessed the courage of Arietta.

She had been a prisoner among Indians before, and she had always managed to get away, safe and sound, too.

The knife-throwing was postponed for awhile, and the old chief came to the fair captive and ordered the rag to be taken from her mouth.

"Well?" said the girl, calmly.

"Paleface maiden heap much brave," answered Jumping Stag.

"You will find out who I am before you get through with me, I guess," she replied.

"Jumping Stag, the great chief of the Arapahoes, likes a paleface maiden who is brave."

"He does, eh? Well, perhaps he won't like me so much by and by. I will kill the great chief of the Arapahoes if he is not very careful."

The chief broke into a laugh.

This sort of talk was amusing to him.

"Paleface maiden heap much talk. She like paleface man; put on big bluff."

"You will find out," was all Arietta said.

CHAPTER VI.

WILD RESCUES CHEYENNE CHARLIE.

Then the old chief questioned the two braves who had caught the girl and learned just how it had been accomplished.

They were commended for what they had done, after which they were ordered to take the fair captive to a tepee and guard her so she would have no possible chance to get away.

"Don't give up, Arietta!" called out the scout, as she was led away. "I reckon we won't be here sich a very long while. Somethin' is goin' ter happen putty soon."

"Oh, I am making the best of it, Charlie," was the reply. "I went too far away from the camp, that's all. But it will all come out right, I hope. So long as they don't harm you it will be all right."

Then she was hurried away and they had no further chance to converse.

Charlie turned his eyes in the direction of the cedar he had seen moving a short time before Arietta was brought to the Indian camp.

It was stock still, but while he looked it moved as though nodding to him.

The scout grew more hopeful than ever.

He was sure that it was Wild who was causing the cedar to move.

But what course the daring deadshot would pursue he had no idea.

If he really was there by the cedar tree he certainly was aware that Arietta was in the hands of the redskins, as well as the scout.

Charlie saw that the squaws, children and little papooses were gathering thickly about the tepee into which Arietta had been taken, so there was little chance of Wild stealing up to it and getting her away.

He decided that he would try to liberate him first, so he would have him to help rescue Arietta.

But the old chief and those who were to try their skill with the knives were coming back now, and the scout knew that he was pretty sure to be put through a course of sprouts that would prove anything but pleasant.

But he knew that it was not likely that any of the braves would make a miss in throwing his knife.

While it might prove fatal to the prisoner, that was not the idea.

The Arapahoes simply wanted to keep their captive in a state of fear during the ordeal.

That was one of the phases of the torturing they proposed to inflict upon him.

The scout looked the crowd over that was going to take part in the contest.

It really was a contest, for those who showed the greatest skill and came the closest to the captive's body without inflicting a wound would be openly praised by the chief.

The first to step up was the old chief himself.

He raised his keen-edged knife, which glittered in the glow of the rising sun, and then—

Cra-ng! The sharp report of a rifle sounded close at hand and the knife went spinning from his grasp!

When Young Wild West started out to find Cheyenne Charlie he felt pretty certain that something had happened to the scout.

That he had been surprised and captured by the redskins was quite evident.

Wild was not long in reaching the place where Charlie had been captured.

The ground being very soft right there, it was easy for him to see that a struggle had taken place.

"It is too bad," he thought; "but they have got him as sure as fate! I suppose the red fiends were prowling around here to find out where we are located. Well, I will go on down and see if I can't find a way to get him out of their clutches."

Wild knew that it was hardly likely that any more of the redskins would be about there, for they would surely take their prisoner to the camp without delay.

But he was very cautious in his movements, just the same.

He went on down the hill, holding his revolver ready for instant use.

But there came no occasion for him to use it, and soon he came in sight of the Arapahoe camp.

That they had chosen the spot vacated by our friends did not surprise our hero, since it was admirably adapted for a camp.

Wild was determined to get close enough to see what they had done with their prisoner.

So he took a look around and decided to work up the hill a short distance and then get around to the root of the tree they had moved around the night before, with the expectation of remaining on the river bank.

In order to reach it Wild would have to get through the line of the guards.

But that was not a hard thing to do for one as experienced in woodcraft as he was.

He could see the Indians who were on guard plainly enough.

There were three of them on the side toward him, one on the river bank and three more on the other side.

It was quite likely that they were keeping watch for a possible surprise from United States troopers, for they surely must have known that it would not be long before they would be pursued.

They had left the reservation in a body, and that meant that they had broken the terms of peace with the government.

Wild moved cautiously, pausing now and then to see where the redskins guarding that side were.

There was only one of them that he was liable to come in contact with, anyhow, but he wanted to avoid it if possible.

desire to take the life of the Indian, and probably be the outcome if they came together, the daring boy was not going to run the chance of losing his own life.

The Arapahoes had declared war against them, but that did not say that our friends should start in to take the lives of the ignorant scoundrels.

By dint of careful work Wild got through the line that was being paraded by the redskin guards, and then he cautiously crawled to the root of the tree he had been aiming for.

He was now within twenty yards of the camp.

The Indians had chosen to pitch their tepees a trifle above the spot where our friends had been camped the night before, so the center of their camp was a few yards above the spot the tents of Wild and his friends had been erected upon.

Cheyenne Charlie was tied to the tree, which was about a hundred feet from where our hero now was.

Wild had, of course, seen him before he got that close to the redskins, but he had not tried to make known his presence.

"So they are going to make a target of him, are they?" our hero muttered under his breath. "Well, that is not very pleasant for Charlie. But I guess they won't hurt him, not while I have my rifle and revolvers left."

Pretty soon he saw Charlie looking his way.

Then it was that he shook the cedar tree slightly.

Wild noted that the prisoner saw it, and then he was sure that he knew that he was there.

While he was waiting for the Indians to start in their fiendish sport our hero was dumfounded to see two braves approach the camp with Arietta as a prisoner!

He could scarcely credit his eyesight, for how they had managed to catch the girl he could not imagine.

He had resolved upon a desperate plan of action to effect the scout's rescue, but now he knew not what to do.

"Things are getting from bad to worse," he thought. "This is certainly what I call pretty tough. Poor Et!"

But when he saw how cool his sweetheart was he brightened up.

He could hear every word that was said, and he felt like rising and cheering the girl for the pluck she showed.

But he was too cool a hand for anything like that.

He was back to his old form now, and he settled right down to business.

"No matter how Arietta got caught, she has got to be rescued, and that is all there is to it!" he exclaimed. "And Charlie has got to get away from the redskins, too. I suppose it would be the best to get him clear first, so he will be able to help save Arietta. I hope Jim and the rest are all right, though I suppose it won't be long before the fiends will go up there and give them a tough time of it. Charlie first, and then Arietta!"

Having come to this decision, the brave young Prince of the Saddle got ready for business.

He knew that his pretty sweetheart was in no immediate danger, but Charlie was.

The Arapahoes were going to hurl knives at the tree he was bound to and see how close they could come to him without hitting him.

That meant that the scout was apt to receive his death-wound at any moment.

When Arietta was placed in the tepee and the crowd gathered about it our hero saw that there was no chance of stealing up to it just then.

He held his rifle in readiness and waited for them to begin on Charlie.

"I'll just shoot the knife from the hand of the first red galoot who starts to throw it. Then I'll rush over and cut Charlie loose while they are looking to find where the shot came from. Lead will have to fly, I suppose, but there is no help for it."

Wild picked out the short route he was to take to liberate the scout and then waited.

The old chief stepped up, and, without any hesitation, he drew a bead on the knife as it was raised and fired.

To say that the redskins were amazed would be putting it altogether too mild.

Consternation seized them, and for the space of two or three seconds they ran about like a swarm of bees that had been suddenly disturbed.

And during that two or three seconds Young Wild West was leaping toward the tree Charlie was tied to.

He had slung his rifle over his shoulder and drawn a revolver with his left hand, while in his right he clutched the knife that was to give Charlie his liberty.

He was halfway to the tree before he was seen by the redskins.

Wild knew he must act quickly if he was to succeed.

A fierce yell went up from the red fiends.

Crack, crack, crack!

The young chief called Lame Elk began firing at the boy.

Wild did not stop to look who the particular one was, but he answered the shots by letting three go into their midst as he ran.

It so happened that he was as close to Charlie as the group was before they saw him.

That gave him a chance to get there first.

And he did get there first, too.

Zip—zip!

The bonds of the scout were severed in a twinkling. Crack!

A bullet came so close to the head of Wild that he could hear the hum of it.

But he was not paying attention to the redskins just then.

Seizing the scout by the arm, he pulled him away from the tree, at the same time exclaiming:

"Run for it, Charlie!"

Then he slipped the revolver he had been using into his hand and brought his rifle into play.

Three shots he fired in quick succession, with the nearest of the Indians within ten feet of him.

The bullets cut them down like grain before the scythe. That was too much for them, and they drew back.

Then Jumping Stag must have issued an order not to fire at them, for no more shots came from the redskins.

But a hundred of them started in pursuit.

"I reckon they won't catch us, Wild," said Charlie. "It's their game ter take us alive, so's they kin torture us. But they ain't goin' ter catch us."

"No," answered Wild, "there is no danger of their coming close enough to catch us as long as we've got hot lead to deal out. If they get too close let them have another dose. I want to let them know that I have started on the warpath now, and they will be sorry that they ever interfered with us, I'll bet!"

"That's jest as sure as yer live, Wild!" exclaimed Charlie.

Crack!

Then the scout let a shot go with the revolver Wild had given him.

He had no tender feelings for the red demons, as might be supposed.

To Cheyenne Charlie a hostile redskin was nothing more than a poisonous reptile.

He had seen so much of their cruelty in his day that he had long since become imbued with the idea that all Indians would only be good ones when they were dead, and the quicker they became good the better it would be for the rest of mankind.

The shot he fired wounded one of them, but they came on with dogged tenacity.

They wanted the two palefaces alive, and when they got them then they would have their revenge.

But there was not a buck among them who could catch either Wild or Charlie in a footrace.

The consequence was that our two friends reached the foot of the hill and the cover of the thick undergrowth and trees that grew upon it something like fifty yards ahead of them.

But the Arapahoes were not in too much of a hurry just then.

In all probability they felt certain that they were forcing the two palefaces to their camp, and that meant that they would be able to capture the rest of them sooner or later.

The more prisoners they had to torture the better they would like it just now, for they had lost some of their braves and they wanted revenge.

"Now I guess we have a chance to get to the camp, Charlie," said Wild. "We have a good fight on our hands, though, for it is more than likely that they will try to take us dead or alive after some of them go under."

Up the hill they went, the redskins dropping back further in the rear, but keeping them in sight all the while—or every now and then, rather—for some of the bushes were tall enough to obscure their forms at times.

In this way our two friends kept on in sight of the camp.

"Hey, Jim!" called out Wild; "here we come out!"

Jim heard and understood.

He saw the two coming and held his rifle in readiness to open fire on their pursuers.

But none came in sight.

It was evident that the redskins had come close enough to see the camp and then halted.

The faces of those at the camp wore an anxious look.

Wild and Charlie understood why.

"The Arapahoes have got Arietta," said Wild, quietly.

"Oh! You know what became of her, then," Jim answered, with a sigh of relief; "we didn't."

"Here is her rifle that Jim found up there," Eloise said, showing the weapon.

Then, while they crouched behind the rocks waiting for the Indians to attack them, the exciting events of the morning were made plain to all hands.

CHAPTER VII.

THE INDIANS LOSE IN THEIR FIRST ATTACK.

Young Wild West knew that they needed a cup of coffee and a bite to eat to put them in shape for what was to come.

While he hardly thought that the party of redskins who had pursued him and Charlie to the camp would attack them, he knew that they would send back word to the chief, and then a larger force would appear and the fight would begin.

"Hop," said he to the Chinaman, "get the coffee made as soon as possible. Jim, just help him with the breakfast. The girls are too nervous just now. They are worrying about Arietta, but so long as she is merely a prisoner in the tepee below she is all right. She is not doing an awful lot of worrying, I know."

Jim hastened to do as our hero directed him, while the scout kept a sharp watch for the redskins.

Just then he caught a glimpse of one of them.

Cra-ang!

Without any hesitation he shot the Arapahoe.

He well knew that the Indians wanted his life, and he was bound to make as many of them go under as was possible before they got it.

"Did you hit him, Charlie?" asked Wild.

"I reckon so," was the reply. "He didn't git a chance ter even think of his death-song! Ther measly coyotes can't drive us out of this place in a week, Wild."

No more of the redskins showed themselves just then.

They knew pretty well that our friends were well protected in the position they had taken, and they did not want to run the risk of being shot.

Chinaman were hurrying with the break-
Anna and Eloise, having taken a little heart
way Wild spoke, set about to assist them.
result was that in a few minutes coffee, venison
and biscuits were handed out.
Wild and the scout ate and drank while they watched
for the Indians.

It was not a great deal that Young Wild West ate.
He only desired enough to keep up his strength.
When he was done he turned to Dart and said:
"Which way did Arietta go when she left to have a look
around?"

Jim showed him.

"All right; I guess I'll go up there and have a look
myself. But I won't get caught by any sneaking redskin,
though, for I will be on the watch."

He set out at once, taking his rifle with him.

It occurred to him that the towering height above
would just be the place to get in order to have a look down
at the camp of the Arapahoes.

"Poor Et," he thought, as he worked his way up the
ascent; "she was doing her best to find out something,
and then she had to go and fall into the clutches of the
fiends! It is too bad, that's what it is! But we will save
her. The Arapahoes won't have her long in their clutches."

He paused now and then and took a look around.

But it was not until he had reached the spot where Ari-
etta had been captured that he was able to see anything
that he was interested in.

He had a pretty good view of the Arapahoe camp, and
could see that there was considerable excitement there.

He also caught sight of a party of redskins coming up
the mountain-side about half a mile off to the right, and
he took it that they were coming to make an attack on
them.

If there were any Indians nearer they were lying low.

Wild easily understood now why it was that Arietta
had been caught by the fiends.

There was a sort of natural path leading right up to
the high point, and she, no doubt looking the other way,
had not heard them approach.

"Well," the boy muttered, "if they come up this way
they can't do us any harm, because they won't be able to
see our camp any more than I can see it now. And if they
attempt to come down by the way I came up here they
will have to do it one at a time and then walk along a
narrow ledge in the same manner. I guess they won't try
anything so dangerous as that."

Wild did not remain there very long.

He knew that it would be but a few minutes before the
approaching redskins would be dangerously close to the
camp.

He made his way down, taking care not to expose him-
self too much, for he knew it was quite likely that some
of the Arapahoes were hiding near at hand, and if they
saw him a bullet would be apt to come his way.

When our hero got down and joined his companions
they looked at him questioningly.

"Did yer see anything, Wild?" asked Charlie.

"Yes, about fifty of the redskins are coming up the hill.
They mean to try and get us, I guess."

"Fifty of 'em, hey? Well, I reckon it'll take a blamed
sight more than fifty of 'em ter do it!"

"I think it will. But let us try and make them under-
stand that we don't mean to let them take us, no matter
if the whole lot comes up. If they make a rush at us we
will have to make every shot tell. That will discourage a
redskin as quick as anything in the world."

"Them what drops don't have time ter git discouraged,
I reckon," observed the scout, laconically.

Wild now turned to Anna and Eloise and told them to
get their rifles and hold themselves in readiness.

The girls quickly obeyed, and two minutes later they
were crouching behind the rocks, ready to send out the
death-dealing bullets into the ranks of their red and sav-
age foes.

"Me fightee ledskins, too," said Hop, and with his big
six-shooter ready in his hand, he crept up to a point where
he could watch the descent below them and waited.

Five minutes later the excitement began.

Everything had been still up to that time, but suddenly
a wild yell sounded and then fully half a hundred painted
Arapahoes came rushing up the slope.

They did not fire, but evidently depended upon their
savage yelling to frighten our friends into submission.

But they had certainly struck the wrong ones for any-
thing like that.

Wild waited until they were within fifty yards of the
rocks they were crouching behind before he gave the order
to fire.

And when he did give the order the words were hardly
out of his mouth before five rifles were cracking away,
punctuated by sharper reports of the Chinaman's re-
volver.

Fully a dozen shots were fired before the Indians made
a move to answer the terrible rain of hot lead.

Then they did fire a volley and promptly started to re-
treat down the slope.

As many as ten of them had fallen, and that was alto-
gether too much for them just then.

They had started on the warpath and they were now
getting what they had usually got in the days gone by.

But it was appalling to them, no doubt, when they real-
ized that so few had wrought such a fearful havoc in their
ranks.

"Give them another dose as they go!" cried Wild.
"There is nothing like making a good job of it after you
once start it. I'll bet they will find out that we are on the
warpath, too, before they get through with us!"

Crack! crack, crack, crack!

The death-dealing fire went out once more, and, becom-
ing demoralized, the Arapahoes scattered and ran for
cover.

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warpath, too, before they get through with us!"

Crack! crack, crack, crack!

The death-dealing fire went out once more, and, becom-
ing demoralized, the Arapahoes scattered and ran for
cover.

Cheyenne Charlie laughed and shook his head grimly.

"I reckon that was a putty good dose," he observed. "Jest let 'em come ag'in if they want some more."

"It seems awful to shoot them that way, though," said his wife, looking at him and shaking her head as though she could hardly bring herself to do it.

"Well, yer kin imagine what they'd do ter us if they got ther chance, can't yer, Anna?" he answered. "Wasn't they goin' ter torture me ter death? An' ain't they got poor Arietta in their clutches at this very minute? There ain't anything that yer kin do ter a redskin that's awful. Jest remember that, gal."

"I suppose you know best, Charlie."

"I reckon I do, Anna, when it comes ter talkin' about Injuns. I've seen so much of 'em that I know all about 'em. There ain't a good one livin'; an' that's all there is ter it!"

Young Wild West was satisfied that the Indians would not attack them again right away, so he decided that it would be a good chance for him to go and rescue Arietta.

"Boys," said he in a whisper to Charlie and Jim, "I am going to leave it to you to hold this spot against the redskins for awhile. I hardly think they will come back very soon, but will try strategy to get the best of us. But while they are trying strategy I will be doing the same thing. I am going to get Arietta away from them. I guess you can manage to keep them off, and I won't be gone a great while, anyhow."

"Go right away, Wild," answered Jim. "The quicker you get Arietta away from the red scoundrels the better it will be. You may have a good chance to do it now, for they will probably be paying so much attention to us just now that they will not keep as good watch at their camp as they generally do."

"That's right," nodded the scout; "go on, Wild, an' don't lose no time about it."

The truth of it was that our hero had been worrying considerably about his sweetheart.

He did not know just how far the villainous old chief might go.

The dashing young deadshot was soon ready to leave.

"I won't take my rifle with me," he said, "as I don't intend to get in a fight with the red fiends if I can help it, and if I do it will be at close quarters."

There was really only one way to get down to the level of the river, and that was by the way they had come up the mountain.

The defeated party of redskins were in the near vicinity, and right on the way, but that made little difference to Young Wild West.

He meant to ascend to the spot where Arietta had been captured and then go on down from that point after first picking out a route.

Assuring his companions that he would not be gone any longer than was absolutely necessary, he started around the rock, made his way along the narrow ledge and then began to go up the ascent.

Though he left his rifle behind, he took his place of it.

The long, flexible rope might come in handy.

Wild soon got to the top of the ascent, and then from behind the rock, he caught sight of the survivors of the redskins who had made the attack upon them a short time before.

The copper-hued fiends had not got together yet.

Some could be seen crawling down through the bushes and using the utmost caution as they proceeded.

Our hero smiled when he noted their actions.

"They are only a cowardly lot, after all," he thought. "It is old Jumping Stag who is the real fighter, though, for he has been through the mill. The majority of these are young bucks, and they have never brought many scalps back to the lodge. They fear us so much that they are not going to allow the wild enthusiasm of the old chief to get them too close to certain danger. But if they only get the chance they will probably be just as savage and cruel as he is, for it is born in the fiends, and it is bound to come out at some time or other, no matter how civilized they appear to become."

The daring boy now began the descent.

He meant to reach the camp and save Arietta, no matter what happened.

Slowly but surely he worked his way down, and in a few minutes he was past them.

Once or twice he was so close to some of them that he thought it hardly possible to get by without being discovered.

If he had been discovered he would have scattered them, for he would have opened fire on them with both revolvers and made it so warm for them that they might have been glad to let him go.

When Wild reached the level ground below he crossed the trail and made his way direct to the river bank.

He intended to work his way to the Indian camp by keeping under cover of the trees and bushes that lined the bank.

It was a good thing that the boy did go to the river, for he had no sooner got there when he heard the sounds made by dipping paddles.

Looking around, he saw a canoe coming down the stream close to the shore.

In the frail craft were two Indian braves and a white girl with her hands bound behind her.

Young Wild West could scarcely believe his eyes.

The girl was Arietta!

CHAPTER VIII.

WILD'S FIGHT IN THE WATER.

Why it was that the two Indians were taking Arietta down the river in the canoe Young Wild West could not imagine.

But he was delighted beyond measure, just the same.

Nothing could have pleased him better, unless the

the girl at liberty and he had met her at the camp.

The redskins in the canoe was a chief, as our hero could tell by his head-dress.

He recognized him as the one he had heard the old chief address as Lame Elk, while he had been near the camp prior to his rescue of Cheyenne Charlie.

Our hero did not lose his wonderful coolness for a single instant.

Though it was a great surprise for him to see his pretty sweetheart in the canoe, he did not become anything like excited and do something rash.

He simply looked up and down the river for a suitable place from which he would be able to give the two Arapahoes a surprise and effect the girl's rescue at the same time.

The canoe was coming down the river quite close to the shore and the two redskins were working the paddles with very little noise.

It was quite evident that they were trying to keep from being seen or heard, and this made it appear to our hero that they were stealing away from the camp with the girl, unknown to the old chief and the rest of the tribe.

And this is just what they were doing.

Lame Elk had taken offense at something old Jumping Stag had said to him and they had quarreled.

It was not about the girl captive, but related to the escape of the scout.

The young chief decided to get square with the old fellow.

He was unmarried, and, seeing in the beautiful paleface maiden a fine young squaw for him, he decided to steal her away and make down the river with her.

Lame Elk really had more followers among the Arapahoes than Jumping Stag did.

But he only let one of them into his proposed plan.

This was a young brave who aspired to be a chief in the near future.

The brave went by the name of Fall-In-Water, and, under the promise of being made a chief when Lame Elk took the place of Jumping Stag, he agreed to help the young chief carry out his scheme.

The idea was to carry the paleface maiden down the river and conceal her in some safe hiding-place and then come back to the camp again.

The escape of the girl would be laid to her paleface friends, so Lame Elk declared.

During the excitement caused by the word that the party of fifty Arapahoes had been repulsed by a heavy loss from the bullets of the palefaces up on the mountain-side, which was brought to the chief by one of the survivors, the two redskins had no difficulty in removing the girl from the tepee she had been confined in and getting her to the river.

Then she was placed in the canoe and the two started down the stream with her.

They had been about to gag her, but Arietta motioned

them not to, and when they allowed her to speak she declared that she would not make an outcry.

Lame Elk believed her, and so she was allowed to have the use of her tongue, though her hands were kept tied behind her.

Young Wild West was not long in formulating a plan of action.

A few yards below him there was a quick bend in the river, and right near it was a tree, the limbs of which hung out over the water.

Wild saw that the canoe would surely make the turn close to the little point that caused the turn, and, acting on a sudden impulse, he threw off his hat and climbed the tree, dropping his lariat by the hat.

Out upon one of the limbs he worked his way until he was directly over the water.

He was not a minute too soon, either, for along came the canoe, the two redskins paddling in a stealthy manner in an effort to get a good distance from the camp before the disappearance of the girl would be discovered.

Wild nerved himself for something desperate when the canoe came around the bend with the two redskins and Arietta in it.

When the frail craft was directly under him Wild leaped down upon them, regardless of what might happen.

Crash!

Splash!

The feet of Young Wild West struck the bottom of the canoe and went through it.

But he had gauged the distance well, and as he struck his hands went out on either side and caught both Arapahoes by their hair.

Splash—splash!

Lame Elk and his companion took to the river head-first.

Our hero had become tangled in the break he had made through the frail birchbark craft, and as it sank with him he whipped out his knife and reached over and severed the bonds of Arietta.

"Get ashore, Et!" he exclaimed. "You can wade, for I am standing on the bottom at this minute. I'll soon join you. I have got to fix the two redskins first."

"Wait till I help you get loose from the canoe, Wild," was the reply from the brave girl, who had quickly recovered from her surprise at the sudden appearance of her dashing young lover on the scene.

Our hero was standing on the sandy bottom of the river now, nearly waist-deep in the water, and the canoe was gradually going down under the weight of the girl.

If she had left it, as he told her to, he would have been hampered by the craft, since it would have entangled his legs so he could have done little but to try and get loose.

And it was necessary that he should do more than that just now, for the two Indians were coming for him for all they were worth.

When the dashing young deadshot hurled them both from the canoe they went out on the side that was toward

the center of the stream, and it so happened that there was quite a deep channel right there.

Before they came to the surface they had drifted a few feet down the stream and were then forced to swim until they could touch bottom.

It was but a few feet for them to swim, but such things take time, and when they came rushing for our hero and his sweetheart, one with an uplifted tomahawk and the other with a knife, Wild was ready for them.

He did not want to fire a shot if he could help it, and the redskins could not if they desired to, since they had lost their shooters when they went overboard in such an unexpected manner.

Only the muzzles of Wild's revolvers had touched the water, so if it was a matter of compulsion he could use them all right.

But he did not think he would have to use them.

Just as the two Indians reached the side of the sunken canoe he managed to extricate himself from it, and then both he and Arietta moved for the bank.

At this the Arapahoe who had the tomahawk let it go at the boy's head.

But Wild saw what he intended to do and he dodged just in time.

The tomahawk whizzed over him and stuck in the tree he had dropped from.

"Get upon the bank and get that for me, Et," he said.

"That will just come in handy, I think."

It was Lame Elk who had the knife, and he now surged forward through the water and struck savagely at the boy.

But the blow was neatly warded off.

"I guess I can give the pair of you all that is coming," he said, coolly. "Just wait awhile and I'll send you both to the bottom of the river!"

Lame Elk drew back to a safe distance.

He was shrewd enough to realize that Young Wild West was simply waiting to make a thrust that would find his heart.

The other Indian, since he had no weapons, kept well out of the way.

But he soon realized that he had to join in the fight, too, for Arietta was now on the bank and in the act of pulling the tomahawk from the tree.

She no sooner had it in her possession than she dropped into the water again and waded out the few feet that intervened between Wild and the bank.

"Here, Wild," she said, speaking as calmly as though there was no danger whatever; "take the tomahawk and let me have your knife! I'll show the red fiends that I can fight, if I am only a paleface maiden!"

"I'll do the fighting in this case, Et," was the reply. "If I couldn't handle two redskins under conditions like these I would be perfectly willing to go under."

He took the tomahawk and then started for the pair.

By this time the brave who had been promised the promotion to a chief had found one of the paddles belonging to the sunken canoe and he now prepared to strike our

hero with it, while Lame Elk was waiting for an opportunity to deliver a thrust with his knife.

There was a smile on the handsome face of Young West.

He was just as confident of defeating the two Indians as he was that the canoe was out of business.

Swish!

The paddle in the hands of the brave came down viciously for his head.

"Splash!"

It hit the water on the left of our hero, for he very neatly got out of the way of the blow.

Whizz—thud!

Wild let the tomahawk go almost at the same instant.

The Arapahoe brave was not quick enough to dodge it, and the sharp point struck his forehead.

Without so much as a groan, he staggered back and sank beneath the water.

"Now, you red hound, I'll give you your medicine!" exclaimed the dashing young deadshot, as he warded off a blow that the young chief struck at him. "It is your turn next!"

"Ugh!" grunted Lame Elk; "Young Wild West heap much brave, but me big chief; me no afraid!"

"Come on, then! The quicker we have it done with the better. I don't propose to stay in the water very long; I have other business to attend to."

The redskin moved a step forward to meet him.

Then the two knives came together with a ring!

Lame Elk let out a shout, as though to spur himself on.

"Young Wild West will die, like the paleface dog he is!" he cried.

"Not by your hand, you sneaking red hound!" retorted Wild, warming up to the work. "There never lived a redskin who could beat me at this game!"

There was something exhilarating about a contest that was on an equal footing, and Wild really enjoyed it, though he knew his opponent was trying his level best to kill him.

The boy could have slain the redskin right at the start, but he did not want to do it.

It was not his liking to take the life of a fellow-creature, even if it was a murderous redskin.

When he was handling a rifle or revolver it was different; there was no chance for sentiment then.

"I will give you a chance, Lame Elk," he said, when he found that he could administer the death-blow at any time he pleased. "Give up and swim for the other side of the river if you want to live!"

The young chief now knew that he stood no show with the dashing young athlete.

He was not a coward, but he valued his life as much as anyone living just then.

But he did not want to show the paleface boy that he was a coward.

He stepped back and lowered his knife, gazing steadily into the eyes of our hero.

threw his arms and threw out his chest.

"Swim, Young Wild West!" he said; "Lame Elk is swimming toward! He will die like the noble red man that you are!"

It might have been a bluff, but, at any rate, he was ready to receive the death-blow.

"Swim!" exclaimed our hero, pointing for the other side of the river.

Without another word, the young chief obeyed.

Then our hero turned to get upon the bank with his rescued sweetheart.

But Arietta was not to be seen!

During the fight in the water she had vanished in some mysterious manner.

"Arietta!" the boy called, softly, and then a guttural laugh came to his ears and the face of the old chief of the Arapahoes appeared through a break in the bushes!

CHAPTER IX.

ARIETTA, IN THE TEPEE AGAIN, FINDS A FRIEND.

It so happened that old Jumping Stag was not long in finding out that the paleface maiden had escaped from the tepee he had ordered her to be placed in.

As Lame Elk supposed, he took it for granted that Young Wild West had managed in some way to get her away from the camp.

But this did not deter him from starting a search for her right away.

He sent for Lame Elk to take charge of the search, but the young chief was nowhere to be found.

Then, after sending out his braves in every direction, he set out himself, taking with him two of the other chiefs who were ready to do anything he bade them.

When Lame Elk uttered his defiant cry as his fight with Young Wild West began in earnest, the old chief and his two companions were not more than fifty yards away from the spot.

They all heard it, and it was quite natural that they should make for the point the cry came from.

They came in sight of the thrilling scene just as Arietta was climbing out of the water.

One of the redskins raised his rifle to send a bullet at our hero, but the old chief stayed his hand.

"The young paleface must be taken alive," he whispered in the language of the tribe; "he is Young Wild West, the most dangerous of all the palefaces!"

Then, ignoring the desperate hand-to-hand fight that was taking place in the shallow water, he crept stealthily forward, and just as Arietta arose to her feet after getting out of the water, he caught her about the neck and dragged her back into the bushes, stifling the cry that arose to her lips at the same time.

The little noise that was made by the action of the old

chief was lost upon our hero, for at that moment Lame Elk was doing his utmost, and he was watching his every move.

The two Indians with him came to their leader's assistance, and poor Arietta, who a moment before thought she had succeeded in getting out of the clutches of the Arapahoes, was quickly bound and gagged.

It all happened so quickly that she could scarcely realize the fact that she was again a helpless prisoner.

To say that Jumping Stag was elated at the sudden turn of affairs would be putting it mildly.

He quite naturally thought that it was Young Wild West who had succeeded in stealing the girl away from the tepee, and that Lame Elk had found him and was fighting to regain possession of her.

"We must take Young Wild West alive," the chief whispered, and then he picked up our hero's lariat and started for the bank.

It was just then that Wild called softly to his sweetheart.

Jumping Stag peered through the bushes and saw him coming to the bank, while Lame Elk was swimming toward the opposite shore.

"Ugh!" exclaimed the chief.

Involuntarily our hero started back.

He now knew why it was that he had failed to find Arietta there to greet him.

He grabbed for one of his revolvers.

It was gone!

During the fight in the water both holsters had dropped below the surface and the right one was gone.

He reached for the other and found it there.

It was on a line with the old chief's head in a twinkling and the boy pulled the trigger.

Click!

That was all.

The action of the water had dampened the cartridge so it would not explode.

Jumping Stag had jerked his head out of sight, but when he heard the click he put it back again and laughed derisively.

He knew what was the matter.

Our hero was exasperated.

He now felt that he had made a mistake in not shooting the two redskins right at the start.

His attempt to rescue Arietta had failed after all, but he was not discouraged.

Just now he must save himself, though, and there seemed but one way to do it.

That was to swim for the opposite shore, the same as Lame Elk was doing.

And before the three villainous redskins were aware of what he was up to, our hero was moving toward the center of the stream with lusty strokes.

Jumping Stag quickly pushed his way through the bushes and sent the lariat whizzing after the boy.

It is a hard thing to lasso a person swimming, anyhow.

and when the old chief had Young Wild West to deal with he might just as well have not wasted his strength.

The boy simply dove and kept on swimming.

Then Jumping Stag called out for Lame Elk to head him off, adding that he must surely be taken alive.

The young chief did not answer.

It was plain that he was done obeying the old chief.

He had started out on his own hook, and he meant to fight for the leadership of the Arapahoes now.

And nothing could have induced him to interfere with Young Wild West just then, for, in spite of the fact that he was an Indian, he felt grateful to the dashing young deadshot that his life had been spared.

It was the action of the young chief that helped our hero out in his effort to escape.

Just then the young chief landed.

He immediately sprang behind a clump of trees and was lost to view.

Wild kept right on swimming, and as the distance was not great, he was not more than twenty or thirty feet behind the Indian.

Not a shot had been fired at him, and he felt glad over the fact. He would have made an excellent target for the redskins had they chosen to shoot at him while he was swimming across the river.

Just as he reached the bank and crawled out the old chief of the Arapahoes must have thought that it was quite certain that he was going to escape, for he took a rifle from one of his companions and fired a shot with it.

But the old villain's aim was not true and the bullet flew wide of its mark.

"Keep up your courage, Et! I'll save you yet!" shouted Wild, and then he darted into the bushes and got out of sight of them.

Arietta felt like giving a cry of despair, but she was possessed of too much nerve for that.

Jumping Stag did not give the order for the two Indians with him to swim the river and start in pursuit of our hero.

On the contrary, he motioned them to lead the captive girl back to the camp.

In less than five minutes it was reached, and then Arietta was once more installed in the tepee that had been her prison until Lame Elk came and took her out.

The gag was removed from her mouth and a bright-eyed squaw came in to comfort her.

The squaw came there for another purpose, too, but Arietta did not know it just then.

Jumping Stag had strong suspicions that Lame Elk was no longer loyal to him, after what had just happened, and had told the squaw, whose name was Shining Eyes, to go in and learn from the paleface maiden the part the young chief had played in her attempt to get away from the village.

He could not have sent a better one, as far as Arietta was concerned, for the squaw had been told by him that she was to be his next wife, and she had become enough

civilized during her life on the reservation and in becoming the squaw of a man who already had living wives.

Shining Eyes was a squaw of much intelligence and quite well educated in English.

She smiled pleasantly when she entered the tepee and Arietta looked at her curiously, not knowing just how to take her at first.

"The paleface maiden feels sad," said Shining Eyes in a low, musical voice.

"Yes," answered the girl, "I do feel sad. I guess you would feel that way, too, if you thought you were surely going back to your friends and then all of a sudden found yourself in the hands of those you hated again."

"Yes," nodded the squaw; "I understand. What is the name of the paleface maiden? Tell me; I am going to be your friend, perhaps."

"Arietta is my name," and the captive girl looked at her, wondering if she really meant what she said.

"Arietta is a pretty name."

"Do you think so?"

The two were beginning to get along first rate now.

"Yes. My name is Shining Eyes, or that is the way it should be called in the language of the palefaces."

"That is much prettier than my name," said Arietta. "Indians have much nicer names than the palefaces, if they have nothing else."

"I left the reservation with the Arapahoes because I was forced to," went on the squaw, an expression of sadness crossing her face. "The big chief of the Arapahoes wants me to become his fourth wife, but I will die first!"

"Ah!" exclaimed Arietta; "so you are a sensible Indian woman, then?"

"I have learned the ways of the white people; I have learned their language, and I have been taught to think as they think. I have tried to live right."

The heart of Arietta warmed toward the squaw.

She felt that she was telling her the truth.

"Have you no father or mother?" she ventured, forgetting her plight for the time being.

The Indian girl—for she was not more than twenty, if that—shook her head.

"No," she answered; "they are both dead."

"Then you must leave the Arapahoes, Shining Eyes. You must go with me when I go."

"But how can you go, Arietta?" asked Shining Eyes, in surprise.

"The way is bound to come. Young Wild West, the great paleface brave, of whom you must surely have heard, is my lover. He will surely get me away from here."

The girl spoke in such a matter-of-fact way that the Indian maiden looked at her in admiration.

"It was Young Wild West who came and took you from the tepee a short time ago?" she asked, looking at her sharply.

"No, it was one of the Arapahoes who took me from here. He put me in a canoe and took me down the river,

Young Wild West came and saved me. It was the young chief, Lame Elk, who took me. He had a brave like that. He did fall in the water, too, and he never came up after he went down. Young Wild West killed him with his own tomahawk, and then he fought Lame Elk and defeated him. He spared his life and told him to swim across the river, and, glad to have the chance, the young chief did so. Then I got out of the water and Jumping Stag caught me again."

"And what happened to Young Wild West and Lame Elk?" questioned the squaw, showing great interest.

"They both got across the river."

"Lame Elk took you from the tepee, then?"

"Yes, it happened just as I have told you."

"I can understand why it was that Lame Elk did not come back, then."

"The old chief will be angry with him when he hears it, I suppose?"

"He will kill him?"

"Yes, or Lame Elk will kill Jumping Stag. I have thought for some time that the young chief wants to take the place of the old. Lame Elk has the majority of the braves on his side, too. He did not want to leave the reservation, but gave in to the old chief. Now I will tell you that Jumping Stag sent me here to find out how it was that you escaped from the tepee."

"And you will tell him, now that you have found out?"

"Yes, I will tell him, just because I know it will worry him."

"He will think that Lame Elk means to rebel against him, is that it?"

"Yes. That will help me, and it will help you, too."

"Why, you could help me, anyhow. You could let me leave this tepee and you could go with me after the darkness comes."

"I know. But wait till then. I am your friend. There will be much trouble in the camp; there will be fighting; I am sure of it. Lame Elk will manage to find some of those who place the greatest of faith in him, and then there will be trouble. I have studied over such things and I know what I say."

Arietta was now getting in quite an easy frame of mind.

"Do you know what headway the chief has made in capturing my friends who are camped up on the mountain-side?" she asked, after a slight pause.

"Yes, I know. They mean to let them be until after the darkness comes. Then they will try to take them all alive. Jumping Stag wants to torture the men until they die, and the girls, including yourself, will be drawn for by his favorite chiefs. It is likely that he will want you for his fifth wife, if he takes me for the fourth."

Shining Eyes spoke so fluently that Arietta would hardly have known that she was an Indian if she had heard her speaking without seeing her.

Then the Indian maiden arose from the bearskin she

had been seated upon while the conversation took place and left the tepee.

Shining Eyes went to the chief and told him what she had learned regarding the escape of the white girl prisoner from the tepee a short time before.

She did not tell him anything else, though, for she was true to her purpose to help Arietta and defeat the old scoundrel in his intentions of making her his squaw.

Jumping Stag looked troubled when he heard what the squaw had to say.

But he commended her for what she had done and told her she might remain as a special guard over the paleface maiden.

This was just what Shining Eyes wanted.

She now felt that she could easily assist Arietta to escape when the darkness came, and if she did manage it she meant to go with her and take her chances with the palefaces.

CHAPTER X.

LAME ELK'S SMOKE SIGNAL.

Wild was not sure but that Lame Elk would be waiting to give him battle, so he was on the lookout for him as he entered the bushes at the side of the stream.

Much to his surprise, he saw the young chief sitting on a stone, the water dripping from his leather breeches and a friendly gleam in his eyes.

"Ugh!" he said, rising to his feet; "so the young paleface brave got here, eh?"

"Yes, I am here, redskin; what are you waiting for?"

"Lame Elk want to help Young Wild West."

"Help me? What do you mean? Only a little while ago you wanted to kill me."

"Young Wild West is a great brave. He did not kill me when he had the chance; Lame Elk wants to pay him back by helping him get the paleface maiden from Jumping Stag."

"I wouldn't trust you, redskin."

"I will help Young Wild West, anyhow, then."

"All right, I shan't stop you."

"Jumping Stag, he go on warpath against the palefaces, and Lame Elk will now go on warpath against Jumping Stag. He will take the old chief's braves from him and lead them back to the reservation."

"Oh! So that is your game, eh? What did you leave the reservation for, anyhow?"

"It was Jumping Stag who made the braves and the young bucks feel that they must go on the warpath against the palefaces; he told them great tales of how they would whip the paleface soldiers and have their old hunting-grounds back, and that they would have all the firewater they could drink for many moons to come. Many of them believed him, and so they left the reservation with him.

I came along, for I wanted to talk to the braves and win

them to my side, and when I became the chief of the tribe I would lead them back to the reservation and make peace with the palefaces. Jumping Stag is no good."

While our hero was talking with the redskin he was peering occasionally through the bushes and noting what was taking place on the other side of the river.

When he saw Arietta conducted back to the camp he gave his full attention to the chief.

"There may be some good left in you, Lame Elk," he said. "Just tell me exactly what you mean to do. You say you are going on the warpath against the old chief? Well, I am on the warpath, too, and don't you forget it!"

"Young Wild West heap much brave."

"Yes, I am a heap much brave, and I am on the warpath. Now, tell me what you are going to do."

"Me send up smoke from three fires when the sun goes down; then the braves who like Lame Elk will come to him. They will know what the smoke signal means."

"And you are going to give up making war on the palefaces, then?" Wild asked.

"Lame Elk has made no war on the palefaces," was the quick reply.

"But you stole the paleface maiden, though, and you were taking her down the river in the canoe, when I happened along and stopped your game. How about that?"

The redskin shrugged his shoulders and looked just the least bit stumped.

"You were not making war against the palefaces, but you were stealing a white girl, Lame Elk. That doesn't look as though you were as straight as you want it to appear."

"Lame Elk no want Jumping Stag to make paleface maiden his squaw."

"And you thought you would take her for yours, is that it?"

"If paleface maiden no want to be Lame Elk's squaw she no be," and the young chief shook his head.

"Well, Lame Elk, I don't take much stock in what you say. It will depend upon how you behave yourself from this time out as to what kind of report I will make to the soldiers when they come."

Our hero decided that it was time that he crossed the river and get back to his friends on the mountain-side.

His cartridges had been spoiled by the water and he stood little show if he came in contact with the redskins on the other side of the river.

"I am going back to my friends, Lame Elk," he said. "I will be on the watch for your three columns of smoke at sunset."

"Good! Me help Young Wild West get paleface maiden away from Jumping Stag. The tongue of Lame Elk is straight."

"All right; if you do I will speak a good word for you and the redskins that follow you when the soldiers come."

The Arapahoe nodded, and then without another word got up from the rock he had been sitting upon and stalked away.

Wild went down the river for about a mile. Then selecting a narrow place, he took a look and, finding the coast clear, entered the water and waded out to the channel.

Then he had but a short swim before he was able to wade to the bank on the other side.

But the most difficult part of it was now before him. He was not aware that the redskins had decided to wait until after dark before resuming hostilities, so he felt that he ran quite a risk in making the attempt to reach the camp.

It was a good two miles from where he now was, but he started out, holding his hunting-knife in readiness to make a fight in case he was attacked by any of the Arapahoes.

But he managed to get along for half a mile without coming in contact with any of them, and then all of a sudden who should appear before him but Cheyenne Charlie!

"We was keepin' a putty good watch, Wild," said the scout, "an' we seen yer comin'. Yer couldn't manage ter git Arietta from ther redskins, hey?"

"I had her free from them once, Charlie," our hero answered, "but luck was against me and they got her again."

"What!"

The scout looked at him in astonishment.

Then he noticed that the daring young deadshot was soaking wet.

"You've been in ther river, I reckon," he said.

"Yes, a couple of times, Charlie. I'll tell you all about it in a few words."

It did not take him long to let the scout know just what had happened.

The two reached the camp without any trouble.

Jim and the girls were much disappointed when they found that Arietta was still a prisoner in the camp of the Arapahoes.

But they were glad to see Wild get back.

Our hero soon retired to the tent and gave Hop his wet clothing to dry before a fire.

The Chinaman was pleased to do this.

Anything special that he was called upon to do for Young Wild West he considered an honor, even if it was nothing more than to dry his wet clothing.

It was noon when the dashing young deadshot was what he declared to be as good as ever.

He had cleaned his revolver and substituted fresh cartridges for those that had been spoiled by the river water.

He had not worn the belt containing the cartridges he used in his rifle, so that made a saving in that direction.

But our friends always had a good supply of ammunition with them when they went on their trips, and there were always extra revolvers packed away in their belongings.

"I guess there is nothing to do but to wait till sunset and see what Lame Elk does," observed our hero, as he took a peep down the mountain-side and found everything

"It is quite certain that the Arapahoes will extra strong guard over Arietta after what happened this morning, so we would be unable to do anything in the daylight."

"That's right," retorted Cheyenne Charlie, "ther only thing ter do is ter make ther best of it an' wait. But I put a good deal of faith in that feller Lame Elk, I do. Of course I don't think he means ter help yer, as he said he would, but when he gits ter fightin' with ther old chief we'll have our chance, see if we don't!"

"Me velly glad when um night comee," spoke up Hop, as he swung the coffee-pot over the fire and turned around.

"Oh, you shet up, you yaller heathen!" retorted the scout. "What do you know about it, anyhow?"

"Me go outee when darkee comee and me help save Missy Alietta."

"You'll be mighty lucky if you save your own skin if yer venture far from ther camp, I reckon."

"Me no 'flaid, Misler Charlie; me gottee fireworks, an' me shootee off and scare um ledskins likee sixty!"

Hop smiled in a childish way and moved over to where the scout was sitting on a rock, brightening up his hunting-knife as though he expected to exhibit it before very long.

The Chinaman stooped as though to pick up something and then stepped back and turned his attention to the coffee-pot.

The next instant there was a sudden hissing sound and a streak of fire began to circle the rock Charlie was seated upon.

"Great gimlets!" cried the scout, getting upon his feet on top of the rock in a hurry and looking at what appeared to be a fiery serpent being chased by half a dozen of its kind in a circle; "what in thunder is ther matter?"

Wild could not help laughing.

"It is one of Hop's fireworks, that's all," he said. "Take it easy, Charlie."

The whirling streak soon died out, and when it did there was nothing but a piece of smoking pasteboard lying on the ground.

Charlie got down off the rock.

"You yaller galoot!" he exclaimed; "ain't I told yer not ter be playin' yer blamed tricks on me? Some of these times I'll git good an' mad an' I'll shoot your pigtail clean from your head!"

"Me only wantee showee fireworks," Hop answered, meekly; "me no wantee scare um poor Misler Charlie."

This remark nettled the scout more than ever.

He started after the Celestial and made a kick at him, which, if it had landed, would probably have caused Hop to remember it for some time.

But it did not land.

The Chinaman was not in the habit of being kicked, not when he expected anything of the kind, and he got out of the way with surprising agility.

The incident made the rest of our friends forget their worriment for the time and a hearty laugh was the result.

Then Charlie cooled down and grinned rather sheepishly.

"It really serves you right, Charlie," said his wife. "You are always sneering at Hop, and I don't blame him for playing a trick on you once in awhile. He never does anything like that to Wild or Jim, you know."

"Oh, I reckon it's all right. I'll git square with him afore many days, see if I don't!"

"Allee light, Misler Charlie," retorted Hop.

The noonday meal was soon cooked and eaten, Jim keeping a watch until the rest were through.

Then he ate his dinner and Charlie went on duty for the afternoon.

At intervals of every half hour Wild went along the ledge and ascended to the spot where he could look down upon the Arapahoe camp.

Each time he went things appeared to be just about the same.

As the sun neared the line of the western horizon Hop Wah became very busy with the belongings he carried with him on his piebald mule.

He had stated that he was going to help rescue Arietta, and as Wild had said nothing to the contrary, he meant to be as good as his word.

The Chinaman always carried no end of small articles with him, and to look at them in a heap one would have given much for them.

It was just as the sun was sinking that our hero suddenly saw three thin columns of smoke rising from a point about two miles up the river.

"Lame Elk has done just as he said he would, boys!" he exclaimed, calling the attention of his two partners to the smoke signal.

"I reckon ther red galoot means business, as far as givin' ther old chief a lickin' goes," answered the scout.

"Me gittee leady to go down and helpee save Missy Alietta now," said Hop, looking at Wild and smiling blandly.

Our hero thought a moment and then gave a nod of assent.

"Go on," he remarked; "something tells me that will be all right, so let yourself go!"

"Me be velly calful, Mr. Wild; me make believe me walkee on um eggs."

"I hope ther yaller galoot don't git caught by ther redskins," observed the scout, who thought more of the Celestial than he generally was willing to admit.

CHAPTER XI.

HOP WAH DISTURBS THE INDIAN CAMP.

It seemed rather strange that Jumping Stag should remain so quiet all that day, but he did.

He had frequent consultations with a few of the young chiefs and braves he thought he could trust, though, for

the old chief knew that Lame Elk was very popular with the rank and file of the Arapahoes.

Jumping Stag did not know whether the young chief had decided to quit them and go back to the reservation and report where they were or but that he might be laying his plans to gain the upper hand of him.

When sunset came he knew that the latter was the correct thing.

He saw the three columns of smoke rising in the air, and so did many of the braves at the same time.

Those who did not see it right away had their attention called to the signal.

The close friends of the young chief knew exactly what the signal meant, though the others did not.

It was the signal that Lame Elk meant to give when he was ready to assert his right as a leader of the tribe.

In less than five minutes from the time the smoke signal first appeared there was considerable excitement in the camp.

Whisperings and mutterings were rife and arguments were taking place on every hand.

Those who had been loath to leave the reservation were now sorry that they had listened to the war-talk of the old chief and they were ready and eager to join Lame Elk and go back, for that is what they thought he wanted them to do.

Arietta, in the tepee, was not long in learning the existing state of affairs.

Shining Eyes, the young squaw, had remained with her pretty much the entire day, and when she heard that there was a revolt among the braves she looked forward for something to happen that would be of benefit to her.

Just as it began to grow dark the squaw, who had been outside gathering information, came in, and in a low whisper said:

"More than half of the old chief's men are making ready to leave him and join Lame Elk. The time will soon be here when we must try and get away and join your friends at their camp."

Arietta smiled.

"Get me my revolver and cartridge belt that they took from me, won't you, Shining Eyes?" she said. "You promised to do so as soon as it became dark enough."

"Shining Eyes will do as she promised the paleface maiden," the squaw answered, dropping back into the Indian style of talking. "Arietta must not be alarmed."

A few minutes later she went out of the tepee, only to return in a short time with the articles Arietta wanted.

The two braves who had been guarding the tepee all day had just been relieved by two more when the smoke signal was first observed by those in the camp.

The latter were more interested in what was taking place in the camp than they were in keeping a watch on the paleface maiden the old chief had appointed them to guard.

They were staunch adherents of the chief, however, and were ready to fight for his cause.

This was probably owing to the fact that they were old-aged men and had been through several campaigns with him.

Arietta had been released from the bonds that bound her hands behind her early in the day, but she had kept on the alert to make it appear that she was still bound in case the guards happened to look in.

But this they did not do, evidently taking it for granted that Shining Eyes was doing her full duty to the chief.

"I am going to cut a slit in the back of the tepee, so I can have a look outside," said the brave girl to her companion, when she realized that it was now about as dark as it would be.

The squaw nodded.

With the hunting-knife that she always carried, Arietta cut a slit in the back of the tepee, and then spreading it apart, took a look out at what was taking place.

Half a dozen fires were burning in the camp, and by the light that came from them she could see many of the braves taking their horses and leaving.

It seemed a little strange to her that the old chief did not make a move to prevent their leaving, but he did not.

He sat in front of the tepee he called his lodge, calmly smoking his pipe and apparently indifferent to what was taking place.

Horses and braves left in groups, and not until the last of those who had decided to join Lame Elk had taken their departure did the old chief lay aside his pipe and rise to his feet.

Then it was that something took place that not one in the camp was prepared to see.

There came a sharp flash right at the feet of Jumping Stag, and then with a hissing sound, a fiery snake shot along the ground in front of him.

Bang!

It struck the side of the tepee and exploded with a loud noise, sending a myriad of sparks in the air and causing consternation among the redskins gathered there in the capacity of advisers to the chief.

"Hop Wah!" exclaimed Arietta, for she knew that the Chinaman was responsible for what had happened right away.

"What is it?" cried Shining Eyes, showing the alarm that she felt, for the proceeding was such a strange and unnatural one that she could not at all understand it.

"My friends are close by," answered Arietta.

"Do your friends have snakes of fire to help them fight the Indians?"

"Sometimes they do. But don't be alarmed, Shining Eyes; the fire won't hurt us, so long as we do not get close enough to it to let it burn us. There is no danger. Ah!"

Just then another of the fiery serpents went scudding along the ground.

It hit Jumping Stag on the foot and exploded, as the other had done.

The whole camp was now in an uproar.

right at the back of the tepee, lying flat on his stomach, for he knew that it would be dangerous for him to rise, since some of the redskins were as close as a dozen feet to him.

But he was bound to let Arietta know that he was there; he could not help that.

Holding his revolver ready in one hand, he worked the other against the skin and began scratching.

Then, much to his satisfaction, the skin parted slightly.

"Hello!" he whispered, taking the risk that there was no one there to interfere with him.

"Wild!" came the answer from within in a low but joyous tone of voice.

"It is I, Et. But you must not come out just now. The tepee is surrounded."

"Come in, Wild; there is room for one more, I guess."

"Is Hop in there?"

"Yes, and a young squaw who is a friend to me—a very good friend, too. Is it safe for you to come in?"

"I guess you had better come out. Just tell Hop to let some of his fireworks go, and then you may have the chance."

"Shining Eyes is coming with me when I come, Wild. I will not go back on her, after promising to take her with me."

"Certainly she can come. But can't she leave while the redskins are looking and get a couple of horses, so you and her can ride away on them?"

"I will do as Young Wild West says," whispered a voice close to our hero's ear. "Which way shall I take the horses and wait?"

"To the opposite side of the camp," Wild answered, knowing that it was the squaw he was talking to.

The next minute he heard her leave the tepee, and as she came around so he could see her he observed that she was running lightly toward the group of women and children of the tribe.

"Hop," whispered our hero.

"Whattée want, Míslér Wild?" came from within.

"When I say the word let a whole bunch of your fireworks go right at the chief. Get ready."

All the Indians who encircled the tepee that could see him from where they were standing had their eyes fixed on the chief, for he seemed to be the target of the mysterious explosive missiles, and they could not understand what it all meant, anyhow.

"Let your fireworks go, Hop!"

The next moment there was a series of hissing sounds and streaks of fire began shooting about among the redskins.

Bang! bang! bang!

Three explosions rang out in quick succession, and then, as if it was the signal they were waiting for, Lame Elk and his followers opened up hostilities.

Wild had been watching Shining Eyes, and he knew she was safely out of the camp by this time, for no one had paid the least bit of attention to her.

"Now is the time, Et!" he exclaimed. "Come on! You, too, Hop!"

On they came, and then all three hurried over to where Charley was.

As they went to the trail they went, and then, without being compelled to fire a shot, they reached the spot where they had left their horses and found Shining Eyes there with the two horses taken from the camp.

Then it was an easy matter for them all to mount and make their way up the mountain.

Arietta, with Wild and Hop, and the Indian girl took the two horses belonging to the Arapahoes.

The firing gradually died out, showing that the fight was of short duration, and as they reached their camping-place there were no further sounds that would indicate that there was any trouble below them.

Jim, Anna and Eloise were delighted to see Arietta back safe and sound, and when they heard how Shining Eyes had befriended her they gave the squaw a warm welcome.

The night was spent in peace and quietness, and when morning dawned Wild ascended to the height above the camp and looked down at the Arapahoe camp.

He saw that the whole band was together again, and that they were making ready to move.

Then he turned his gaze down the rough mountain trail and saw a solitary Indian riding up.

It was Lame Elk.

Our hero descended from the cliff and told his companions who was coming.

The young chief soon came in sight, waving a white handkerchief.

Wild motioned for him to come on, and then Lame Elk said:

"Jumping Stag is dead and the Arapahoes are all going back to the reservation. Good-by, Young Wild West! You no have to go on the warpath now."

With that he was gone.

"Well, I was on the warpath, as far as the saying goes, even if it wasn't such a war," our hero remarked.

As they reached a little town two days later without mishap, this ends the story of Arietta Among the Arapahoes.

THE END.

Read "YOUNG WILD WEST AND 'NEBRASKA NICK'; OR, THE CATTLE THIEVES OF THE PLATTE," which will be the next number (175) of "Wild West Weekly."

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